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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: KURDISH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATION ON TURKEY/PKK CRISIS

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Ellen Germain for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Kurds Get Support From CoR, GOI -- And Sistani

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¶1. (C) Adnan Mufti (PUK), Speaker of the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA), led a hastily-assembled delegation to Baghdad October 31 ) November 4 to meet with the Council of Representatives (CoR) and the GOI leadership to discuss the Turkey/PKK crisis. At a dinner for the delegation on October 3 hosted by General Babakir, chief of the Iraqi general staff, Mufti said that the delegation,s session at the CoR was very good and that all the political blocs declared their support for their &Kurdish brothers<sup>8</sup> and the need to defend the Kurdistan region as part of the territory of Iraq. He said the delegation also had good meetings with PM Maliki, President Talabani, VPs Adel Mehdi and Tariq Hashimi, and FM Zebari.

¶2. (C) Mufti said the delegation had traveled down to Najaf and had an excellent 40-50 minute meeting with Grand Ayatollah Sistani. Mufti was amazed at how closely Sistani was following the situation, and enthused over how well-informed he was about the details of the PKK/Turkey situation and the deep understanding revealed by his questions. He said Sistani expressed strong support for the Kurds, stressing that the Kurds and Arabs are all brothers and that the KRG is an integral part of Iraq. Mufti also noted with admiration that Sistani had shaken hands with the sole female parliamentarian in the delegation. He wound up by saying that he had become &a propagandist<sup>8</sup> for Sistani.

Standard Accusations Against Turkey

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¶3. (C) Fadhil Mirani, General Secretary of the KDP, offered up the standard Kurdish line that Turkey,s recent actions are not really about the PKK, but rather are a pretext for Turkey,s real aim of undermining and destabilizing the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). He reiterated the strong friendship between the Kurdish people and the U.S., and demanded to know why Turkey would not recognize the KRG. In response to A/PolCouns,s argument that the KRG needed to take concrete actions against the PKK such as cutting off supply lines, closing PKK offices, and beefing up security at the airport, and make those actions public, Fadhil claimed the measures had already been taken and were &all over the news.<sup>8</sup> Mufti added that if Turkey wanted to do a bombing raid on Quandil mountain, it should just go ahead and do it quietly.

Benchmark Legislation

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¶4. (C) Turning to legislation, CoR Second Deputy Speaker Aref Tayfur (KDP), who was also present, expressed pessimism

about the prospects for swift passage of the hydrocarbons, provincial powers, and elections laws. However, he thought the de-Baathification law and the 2008 budget might pass by the end of the year. He noted that there are two different drafts of the de-Baathification law in the CoR right now, but the leaders, draft (agreed to in the August 26 leaders, communique) was the good one and the two versions needed to be reconciled. He said that although the Shia have been opposing the de-Baathification law because it is & too merciful,<sup>8</sup> he believed it might make it out of committee next week. Tayfur said that the provincial powers law was with the Shura council, and declined to offer any estimate of when the Shura might complete its review.

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